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SUBJECT: Joint Weeka No. 23 for State, Army and Air Departments - From G - Section

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The questionable methods of the court at Salamá in ordering the arrest of a considerable number of persons suspected of implication in the March 29 uprising there were disclosed when the Court of Appeals in Guatemala City ordered the release of fifteen individuals for lack of evidence and rebuked the judge at Salamá for failing to verify charges against them. The rift in the railway workers' union STIF between pro- and anti-Communists continued as both factions drew up slates for the election of officers now scheduled to be held in mid-June.

DOMESTIC AFFAIRS

The failure of the Court of First Instance at Salamá to verify charges against fifteen persons from San Antonio, Suchitepéquez who were arrested on April 29 for suspected complicity in the attempted revolution of March 29 was criticized by the Ninth Chamber of the Court of Appeals when on June 3 it ordered their release for lack of evidence. After their release, one of the prisoners, Sr. José Lisandro MARIN, told the independent press that the arrests had resulted from a letter to the judge at Salama, Sr. Rómulo REYES Flores, which on investigation proved to have been signed with the name of a man who had died 25 years ago. Sr. Marín attributed his arrest to political animosity. He asserted that Sr. Reyes, a Honduran, before appointed a judge, had applied for the position of Secretary of the Municipality (County) of San Antonio Suchitepéquez and Sr. Marín as alcalde and several other members of the Municipal Council had opposed the appointment. The Court of Appeals also ordered the provisional release of three women, but rejected the pleas of the remainder of the accused, including the anti-Communist student leaders from Guatemala City, who were to remain in prison pending formal trial.

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LABOR

Following the decision of the Government's Administrative Department of Labor (DAT) recognizing the pro-Communist Executive Committee headed by Sr. Aristeo SOSA Jr. and ordering it to hold elections for new officers in June in accordance with the union's regulations (Weeka No. 22), Sr. Sosa announced on June 3 that elections would be held on June 18-19-20 for five positions on the Executive Committee, including the influential post of Secretary General. His followers and the opposing faction headed by Sr. Arturo MORALES Cubas began preparations to wage a vigorous election campaign while at the same time the Morales Cubas group continued its efforts to have the authorities withdraw recognition from the Sosa Executive Committee in favor of the rump committee headed by Sr. Gonzalo GUTIERREZ.

Because of the internal strife in the union, union officials were disinclined to press judicial proceedings for a new collective contract with the IRCA railroad. This case is now pending before the Third Labor Court which has sought to organize a conciliation board but has so far been unable to find anyone willing to serve as the employer's representative. Mr. Lara recently told Mr. Harold HAASE, the railroad's General Manager, that he would informally ask the judge to postpone action on the case until the middle of June.

R E Schoenfeld
Rudolf E. Schoenfeld

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